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Door. 846-852. J. A. MacCulloch. b. r.

Slight mention is made of Greek and Roman ritual and beliefs connected with doors.

Drama (Greek). 879-883. D. M. Robinson. bb.;
(Roman). 898-907. Kirby Flower Smith. f. r.
(To be concluded)

BARNARD COLLEGE.

GRACE HARRIET GOODALE.

REVIEW

Wagner's Dramas and Greek Tragedy. By Pearl Cleveland Wilson. New York: Columbia University Press (1919). Pp. 97. \$1.00.

This doctoral thesis from Columbia University has at least the merit of being different from the ordinary dissertation on a classical subject. In fact it is only secondarily a study in Greek literature at all. As the title suggests, it is primarily a study in Wagner's dramas—in the resemblances between them and Greek tragedy. The ordinary Hellenist, even though he be also a lover of music and an admirer of Wagner, is unaware how far-reaching and subtle the resemblances are. The general notion that Wagner was much influenced by Greek tragedy is of course common property; one may also have read the composer's own account of his early admiration for Greek tragedy and of the principles on which he worked. What the author here does is to analyze the general notion into its particulars; and of these very few persons are at all aware. So far the work was worth doing and is not unsuitable as a doctoral thesis in Classics.

That does not alter the fact, however, that the subject affords little occasion to show a wide or thorough acquaintance with the tragedians. Miss Wilson may have that acquaintance; but her subject did not require it nor does either her text or her bibliography give any indication of it. As was said above, her theme is really one aspect of Wagner. Also, one who is not a trained musician may be allowed to think that some resemblances found—musical parallels to literary methods—are rather far-fetched. Not a few of them, indeed, Miss Wilson states with due notes of caution, are as assured or demonstrable.

The essay begins by recalling, quite properly the fundamental differences.

While Greek tragedies are dramatic poems, with their range of expression extended by music, Wagner's works are dramatic symphonies, with their meaning made clear by words.

Then follow quotations that bring out Wagner's classical education and his admiration for Greek literature, especially for Homer and for Aeschylus. When he undertook to compose, no longer operas of the older form, but music-dramas, naturally those subjects alone attracted him which presented a musical as well as a poetic import, subjects that were "capable of no other but a musical treatment". Music was the controlling factor. That could not but affect vitally the substance of the drama; the proportion between the elements of life presented could not but differ profoundly from that in Greek tragedy. The scenes of emotion, not the

dramatic framework nor the reading of life in its other aspects, are what stand out for the listener, and were meant to stand out. Accordingly there is no direct imitation of Greek tragedy. But the orchestral composition, running through the entire action, in a way takes the place of the Greek choral odes that separated the *epeisodia*. Also, Wagner had learned from Greek tragedy how much more effective are scenes where not more than three main characters occupy our attention at once. Over against these characters a group of minor characters—Rhine maidens, Valkyrs, and the like—are treated as a unit, like the Greek chorus. This feature, to be sure, Wagner continued from previous operatic usage, which took the idea from antiquity. The orchestra, too, furnishes the quiet close, the return to an everyday level, which was a function of the Greek *exodion*.

Wagner's closer likeness to Aeschylus than to Sophocles or Euripides is emphasized. Both loved to construct on a large scale and aimed at the grandiose. One analogy with Euripides, which has long seemed to me significant for the latter, Miss Wilson had no particular call to mention. I mean their personal attitude toward the stories they treat, drawn from the legends of their race. In neither case does a literal faith in the historical truth of the legend come into the question. For both dramatists the legends furnished convenient outlines, which they could vary in details, on which to construct such representations of life as they desired for their artistic purpose. For Euripides his handling of the traditional material affords no ground for inference as to his personal belief or disbelief. It affords no basis for the assumption of an atheistic propaganda. Why should it, any more than for Wagner? Least of all does his Bacchae furnish any ground for supposing a late return to orthodoxy.

YALE UNIVERSITY.

THOMAS D. GOODELL.

THE CLASSICAL CLUB OF PHILADELPHIA

The 149th meeting of The Classical Club of Philadelphia was held on Friday, March 5. After discussing the relations between the Secondary School and the University, the Club placed itself on record as absolutely opposed to the certificate system of admission to College, and as recommending the Comprehensive Examinations of the College Entrance Examination Board as an obligatory test for all candidates. The majority of those present were Secondary School men.

B. W. MITCHELL, *Secretary*.

A MODERN PARALLEL

With the story carried by the newspapers, recently, of an American soldier's love for a young English woman, and of his wife's act in inviting the young woman to live with her, may be compared Valerius Maximus 6.7.1:

Atque, ut uxori quoque fidem attingamus, Tertia Aemilia, Africani prioris uxor, . . . tantae fuit comitatis et patientiae, ut, cum sciret viro suo ancillulam ex suis gratam esse, dissimulaverit . . . tantumque a vindicta mens eius afuit, ut, post mortem Africani, manu missam ancillam in matrimonium liberto suo daret.

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P. G. MOOREHEAD.